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the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 27

Fourteenth Year

July 11, 1947

World Conference of Christian Youth, Oslo 1947

On July 22nd the World Conference of Christian Youth will begin in Oslo (see EPS No. 22). According to present figures, there will be 920 delegates, 80 senior delegates, 150 leaders besides a number of interpreters and staff members at Oslo. A preparatory conference for all the leaders at the Oslo Conference will be held at Oslo July 17-21. One of the most important elements in the meeting will be a communion service on Sunday in a chapel on a hillside near Oslo. The Rev. Alex Johnson of Norway, chairman of the conference, will lead the service. Already delegates are on their way to Oslo.

Indonesia:- Despite transport difficulties and current political problems ten Indonesian young people sailed on May 23, for Oslo.

Jamaica:- Before the departure for Oslo of the two Jamaican delegates on June 6, a representative group of Christian youth met for a dedication service. About 300 young people attended the service led by the Bishop of Kingston. Delegates received a send-off by an Anglican Bishop who is the first coloured bishop in the British West Indies.

Egypt:- Egyptian young people have been holding Oslo study groups, and some of them held an Oslo Preparation Conference in a camp by the Pyramids; groups participating include the Y.W.C.A., Y.M.C.A., Student Christian Movement. They report that they "had quite an exciting time, considering questions youth in other countries were thinking about."

Gold Coast:- A Y.W.C.A. group in the Gold Coast, Africa, reports that they have their answers to the ten Oslo questions, and have sent them to the conference. Although this group of working girls was too small to send a delegate, they concluded after their studies that they ought to have a representative at the conference. Arrangements have been made to send a compatriot who is at present studying in England.

Greece:- Finances have been no small problem for many Oslo Youth delegates. The Greek Y.W.C.A. delegation has been struggling quite hard. Recent reports state that members and friends have raised two million drachmas, so that a girl may come from Athens and another from Salonika.

Norway:- Norwegian young people have started a campaign where each person who gives a crown receives a certificate signifying that he is a "host" of the conference.

Czechoslovakia:- Czechoslovakian church youth hope to make their contribution at the World Conference of Christian Youth by helping to serve as a "bridge between the East and the West". They are also concerned about the relations between formerly occupied countries like theirs and the now defeated nations like Germany. They expressed an urgent desire that the Oslo Conference would help to bring reconciliation.

Philippine Islands:- The Philippine delegation travelling by air has reached Geneva and will visit Paris and Stockholm before going on to Oslo.

Displaced Persons:- Interest in the coming World Conference of Christian Youth has penetrated Displaced Persons camps as well as Prisoners of War camps. At present efforts are being made to bring six youths from German D.P. camps to Oslo.

Prisoners of War:- Meanwhile, German prisoners of war in a camp in France have sent a neatly prepared booklet of greetings to the Oslo Conference as a sign of their belonging to the total world wide Christian fellowship.
E.P.S. Geneva

INDIA

Inauguration of Church Union

According to Dr Dermott Monahan, Director of the Press Information Service for the Inauguration of Church Union in South India, the plans for the ceremonies for the Church Union in South India (see E.P.S. No. 20) are now worked out.

The United Theological College, Bangalore, was the scene, from June 10-13, of the twentieth and final meeting of the Joint Committee, which for twenty-eight years has laboured to bring about this union. It was decided that the inaugural ceremonies should take place in St. George's Cathedral, at Madras, on Sunday September 27. Three great acts are to be performed: the inauguration, the commissioning of existing bishops and presbyters for service in the Church of South India, and the consecration of nine new bishops.

The greatest possible care has been taken in the preparation of the orders of service so as to satisfy all traditions, respect all principles, safeguard treasured beliefs and yet preserve a harmonious unity of liturgy. An air letter was read out from the Archbishop of Canterbury approving the proposed orders of service for the consecration of bishops and ordination of presbyters, as acceptable to Anglicans.

The central act of the inaugural service will be the placing on the altar of the Basis of Union and the Constitution with the signatures of all bishops, presbyters and deacons who have assented to that Basis and accepted the Constitution. A solemn declaration of the Consummation of Union will be read by the Rt. Rev. C.K. Jacob, the Indian bishop in Travancore and Cochin. This will be followed by the commissioning of all existing ministries for service in the newly constituted Church. This is in no sense a re-ordination of any priest or minister. All are to be accepted as ministers of the Word and Sacraments.

The last of the greee great acts will be the consecration of nine new bishops, designated from each of the three uniting Churches. Bishop Jacob will preside and he will be assisted by the Bishops of Madras and Tinnevely, with six presbyters from the Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational and Reformed Churches. The Rev. J.S.M. Hooper of the British and Foreign Bible Society, who has for many years taken a leading part in the movement, as secretary of the Joint Committee, will preach the sermon.

It is expected that a hundred Church leaders from other countries will gather to witness these momentous union celebrations and to give their counsel to the Church. After the central ceremonies there will be special services held in all the fourteen new dioceses, attended by many of the million Christians who will constitute this mighty Church of South India.

Stressing the importance of the coming inauguration Dr Monahan says: "There have been unions, of which perhaps the most notable has been the United Church of Canada, combining as it does the Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist traditions. But so far, every union has been between bodies already closely linked together by history and sentiment. It is in South India alone that a union scheme has come to fruition between the Anglican and Free, the episcopal and non-episcopal traditions. This is something unique and epoch making. The history of Christendom records nothing like it. It is not surprising, therefore, that there is tense, eager, even exuberant expectation abroad in South India."

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

The Unitarians and the World Council of Churches

Opposition to "the theological tests set up by the World Council of Churches" as a basis for approving applications from Christian denominations for membership in the Council, was expressed in a joint statement in Boston, June 29, 1947, by the Rt. Rev. Frantisek Kovar, Bishop Patriarch of the Czechoslovak Church, and Dr Frederick May Eliot, president of the American Unitarian Association.

The statement was made public on the eve of the return of the Czechoslovak prelate to his country following a six weeks' stay in the United States as guest of the Unitarians. Dr Kovar was formerly a Roman Catholic priest. He entered the Czechoslovak Church in 1920 when it was formed.

The joint statement said: "We hold any creedal barrier to admission to the congregation of Christ's flock an affront to His inclusive spirit... We stand in opposition to the use of ecclesiastical power, whether by the Roman Catholic Church or by any other, to support reaction and impede the advance of democracy.

"We stand in opposition to all imperialism, placing our confidence in the capacity of mankind to devise, implement and maintain an organisation of nations that will progressively develop into a true and trustworthy world government.

"We stand in opposition to any totalitarian programme, whether capitalistic or communistic, as far as it denies the liberties and violates the basic rights which our liberal Christianity affirms."

E.P.S. Geneva

HONDURASUnited Missionary Work

The Inter-Mission Committee of Honduras, now a year old, recently held its second annual meeting in San Pedro Sula. Two new groups were admitted to full membership, making a total representation of six missions (Zion Methodist Mission, Friends Mission, Evangelical and Reformed Mission, Central American Mission, National Holiness Missionary Society, Moravian Mission).

New action of the Committee looks towards a better definition of the territory each mission occupies, with a clear understanding that "no two missions should work in the same territory of a municipio as understood by Honduras law, except by consent of the Inter-Mission Committee".

Free interchange of information was a characteristic of this year's meeting. The language study plan for new missionaries comprising two years in Spanish was approved. The Central American Mission has begun an Evangelical Bookstore in the capital and all member missions have pledged to patronise it.

President Tiburcio Carias Andino sent the following message in response to a letter from the Committee apprising him of the existence of this organisation: "I pray for a happy outcome of the cultural activities in which you are engaged, the primary objective of which is to inculcate in the Honduran a love of culture, of work, and of country, by means of the spiritual resources at your disposal."

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATESStudents Explore the Ecumenical Task of the Church

During the second week in June the North American Inter-Seminary Conference at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, was convened. Seven hundred theological students and professors attended this ecumenical gathering from the United States and Canada. The theme of the meeting was: "Man's Disorder and God's Design" (the main theme of the 1948 Assembly of the World Council of Churches) and its fundamental purpose was to explore the ecumenical task of the Churches and the meaning of this for the ministry. Twenty-three platform speakers from the pastorate, ecumenical agencies, and theological faculties, including three representatives of the Younger Churches, together with fifty Bible group, discussion and special interest group leaders provided outstanding leadership for the conference deliberations.

Fundamental analysis of the cultural, political and economic forces which now challenge the Church; consideration of the essential message, world mission and unity of the Church; and discussion of the concrete task of the minister and his congregations formed the sequence and content of the conference deliberations. Although no resolutions were passed, or statements made, the effect of the conference may be described as three-fold:

1. A new and enlarged vision of the character of the Church and its calling in the present world. For many there began the opening of a truly ecumenical vision.

2. A humbling of spirit and deeper dedication, as representatives of 48 denominations learned from each other and caught the spirit of being all members of one body, called by one Lord to a common mission.

3. The launching of a greatly strengthened continuing student movement in the theological seminaries, dedicated to seeking the unity of the Church and for fulfilling its world mission.

E.P.S. Geneva

POLAND

An Ecumenical Paper

In Warsaw the first number of the new ecumenical paper "Kosciol Powszechny" has been issued. It is published by Pastor Z. Michelis on behalf of the Polish Ecumenical Council. The first number contains contributions by eminent Polish Church leaders of different confessions on the seize and growth of the ecumenical movement, the concern, and particular problems of the Churches in Poland, the ecumenical idea in the light of Polish messianism, the building up of inter-church relations in Poland, and church reconstruction as well as news items about church life in other lands, which were translated into Polish from the Ecumenical Press Service. With the publication of this new periodical the Polish Ecumenical Council has created an organ, which will render valuable service both to Church co-operation in Poland, and also to the Churches in other countries.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY

"St. Michaels-Stiftung"

The "St. Michaels-Stiftung" has been founded by a group of well-known people in the public life of Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg, led by Dr Steltzer (until recently Minister-president in this district). Without setting up any narrow confessional barriers, this new movement aims at arranging contacts between Christian leaders in foreign countries and Christian representatives of German life in the spheres of culture, economics and social life. Further, its purpose is to encourage co-operative study of the problems which beset the Christian in his contact with the world. The leaders in this movement will be laymen, who will however have the support of an advisory group of clergy.

E.P.S. Geneva

SPAIN

Statement on Protestant Conditions

"L'Etoile du Matin", a paper issued by the Evangelical Spanish Committee known as "Pro-Hispana", has published the following appeal (June-September 1947):

"Dear Brothers in Jesus Christ, the Evangelical Church in Spain, which is one with that of our Reformers and Martyrs of the 16th century, whose version of the sacred scripture it preserves faithfully, send you this message of Christian love and asks God to bless your different activities.

It is now nearly 80 years since our Church has been living under a régime of religious toleration which has been full of difficulties and vexations. Never, however, has this toleration been so restricted as since the arrival to power of General Franco, which has been the veritable triumph of the Roman Church. Some respite has been given us with the law of July 18, 1945 called "Fuero des Espagnoles" (see E.P.S. No. 36, 1945) which allows us to exercise our form of worship in private. This however is always, like the sword of Damocles, suspended above our heads. When to-day we celebrate our worship openly we do it absolutely at our own risk. It is indeed a perilous undertaking, for the authorities can always interpret the terms of the law as they like.

But now this is what we have not got:

1) No respect is given to our religion or to that of our families. Our children are obliged to receive Roman Catholic religious instruction, and also to be present at Mass. No Protestant schools are allowed.

2) We have no right to publish our own papers, or our own works of theology, or even our own hymn books.

3) Our own members are not allowed to contract a civil marriage although they have been baptised into the Roman Church.

4) Spanish Protestants are not allowed access to various posts under the State on the pretext that the State is Roman Catholic. We ask that the religious beliefs of our people should be respected... We ask for the right of burying our dead according to our own faith, and of celebrating a religious service at the graveside, and we want to be sure that in districts where the civil cemetery does not exist that a corner may be reserved where we may bury our dear ones in a place which is perfectly suitable.

5) We wish to be able to preach the Gospel openly in order that our compatriots may abandon their attitude of indifference and incredulity. In the present state of affairs, we cannot dream of trying to found new churches. We love our country, we are happy to contribute to its development taking our stand upon the principles of our Evangelistic faith. We hope that this message will find you disposed to help us, and we pray that for us all it will be an occasion of uniting us still more closely in the fellowship of our Lord and Saviour."

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY

Visit of a Dutch Reformed Church Delegation

From June 22-29, a delegation of the Dutch Reformed Church consisting of clergymen and laymen visited the British and American zones of occupation in Germany. The purpose of the delegation was to establish the first personal contact between the Dutch Reformed Church and the Evangelical Church of Germany, to get acquainted with the moral problems prevailing there and to consider possibilities for spiritual and other help which might be given by the Dutch Churches.

Among the places visited were Elberfeld-Barmen, Essen, Bonn, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Göttingen, Bielefeld and Münster. The delegation viewed the Evangelical Hilfswerk and gained some insight into the situation within the Evangelical Church. Visits were paid to the Moderamen of the Provincial Synod of the Reformed Church in the Rhineland, Professor Karl Barth, Bishop Wurm of Württemberg, Pastor Martin Niemöller, the Bethel Institutions at Bielefeld and other places.

E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAIN

Serb Orthodox Seminary

Dorchester Theological College, which entertained some Serbian theological students during the first World War, has once again become a temporary training ground for Yugoslav students. About eighteen months ago, after consultation with some of the leaders of the Serb Orthodox Church, plans were

started to enable the Church of England once more to assist the war-shattered Serb Church in training its students. A capital grant was allocated by the Church Assembly Commission for Christian Reconstruction, and an administrative committee set up under the chairmanship of Bishop Harold Buxton. E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

More Laymen in the Church

Mr. Charles P. Taft, president of the Federal Council of Churches, challenged 200 Protestant Church Council executives attending the National Conference of the Association of Council Secretaries in Williams Bay, Wis., to include more laymen in their organisation and work. Dr Taft pointed out the need to have a representative group of the constituency of the Church in their planning and organisation.

"The Church must be a leader, but it cannot be so far out in front that the laymen are left behind", he declared. "We must set up an educational process that will bring all groups in." Dr Taft challenged his hearers to restate great Protestant doctrines in laymen's language, claiming that present doctrines are put into the language of the 16th and 17th centuries.

E.P.S. Geneva

POLAND

Award to Bishop Paul Garber

Bishop Paul Garber of the Methodist Church in U.S.A., ambassador of his Church in the Reconstruction Department of the World Council of Churches and supervisor of Methodist activities in Europe, has been awarded the decoration of Commander of "Polonia Restituta" by President Bierut. The announcement said that Bishop Garber was honoured for "propagating friendship between Poland and other countries, for his faith in rebuilding war devastated Poland and giving it his moral and spiritual leadership." "Polonia Restituta" is the highest reward of the Polish State.

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY

Political Interest in Church Activity

One of the regional sections of the "Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands" (Social Unity Party of Germany) in the Eastern Zone, recently sent a circular letter of the local groups of the party, which gives the following directions for reports to be sent in to the Regional section:

"1) How does the population re-act to the general political questions? (Questions of the Saar and the Moscow Conference)

"2) What is the character of the activity of the Church?

"On this second point, we ask our supporters to give us the greatest help possible. What really matters here is that our members should visit the services in the churches and find out whether the sermons are purely religious in character. Whether they are conducted in such a way that they influence the democratic education of the people, or whether the attempt is made to influence church attenders by special turns of speech and arguments in such a way that they do not do justice to the efforts for a democratic reconstruction of the people. It would interest us very much to know whether, in the sermons, it is pointed out who are really guilty for the present misery of our people."

E.P.S. Geneva

